

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0263 0741924
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 141924Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8630
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 7443
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 3869
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2950
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAR LIMA 2486
RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 0502
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 3083
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 3406
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

id: 145983
date: 3/14/2008 19:24
refid: 08QUITO263
origin: Embassy Quito
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination:
header:
VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0263 0741924
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 141924Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8630
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 7443
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 3869
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2950
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAR LIMA 2486
RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 0502
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 3083
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 3406
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

----- header ends -----

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000263

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/14/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [EC](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH DEFENSE MINISTER SANDOVAL

Classified By: Ambassador Linda Jewell for Reasons 1.4 (b&d)

11. (C) Summary: During a positive March 13 meeting with Defense Minister Sandoval, the Ambassador emphasized that we value our relationships with both Colombia and Ecuador and want to continue supporting GOE efforts on the Northern Border. Sandoval recognized how inadequate his resources were to the task of controlling the border and welcomed continued USG cooperation. He felt the Colombian military had betrayed him, and called Chavez' actions unhelpful. The Ambassador sought to put to rest allegations of Manta FOL involvement and pressed for rapid conclusion of an exchange of diplomatic notes providing protections to temporary U.S. military personnel. (End Summary)

12. (C) The Ambassador met March 13 with Defense Minister Wellington Sandoval; Under Secretary of Defense General Pena also participated. Sandoval appeared grateful that the Ambassador requested the meeting. The Ambassador underscored

that the United States valued its relationships with both Colombia and Ecuador and that our support for Colombia did not mean we were against Ecuador. Sandoval made clear that he felt personally betrayed by Colombia's failure to give any notice of the impending incursion, citing good operational contacts with the Colombian military, who had often shared information that the Ecuadorian military acted on. Sandoval volunteered that he knew Venezuelan President Chavez' support had been unhelpful to Ecuador's cause.

13. (C) The Ambassador highlighted U.S. interest in continuing to work with Ecuador in the Northern Border area. Sandoval acknowledged how strapped the Ecuadorian military was and that it could not control the border with what it had. He cited the fact that, although the press reported major Ecuadorian troop movements, in fact the military had only one functioning helicopter that made ten trips to the border with 18 passengers each time. Sandoval hoped the Ecuadorian military would now receive more government resources. He noted that even if the radar had been on, it would not have detected the Colombian aircraft since they were flying very low. Sandoval stated that it would take an enormous amount of resources to control the border effectively. The Ambassador pointed out that a scape-goating witchhunt against Ecuadorian military leaders would not be productive; Sandoval agreed. (Comment: We fear that pro-U.S. officers might be the victims of such an action.)

14. (C) The Ambassador raised the pending diplomatic note, which would provide protections for short-term visits by U.S. military personnel and allow suspended training and exercises to resume. These programs can help strengthen the capacity of Ecuador's military to meet its Northern Border challenges. She explained that Fuerzas Comando (a large multilateral special forces exercise which Ecuador will host in June) would have to be called off soon if the exchange of diplomatic notes were not finalized. That would mean the loss of an excellent opportunity to begin to rebuild regional trust and goodwill. Sandoval promised to speak to the Foreign Minister on the subject the next day.

15. (C) The Ambassador offered assurances that the U.S. Forward Operating Location (FOL) in Manta had no role in the Colombian military operation, stressing that its assistance would not have been needed since Colombia had the capability to achieve this operation with its own Embraer Super Tucanos. Sandoval said he was now aware of that fact, although there had been some earlier confusion.

Jewell

=====CABLE ENDS=====